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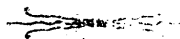
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THE
HIGHER CRITICISM :

THE
GREATEST APOSTASY OF THE AGE.



BY

D. K. PATON.

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HIGHER CRITICISM:

THE

GREATEST APOSTASY OF THE AGE.

BY

D. K. PATON.

“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—*Jude* 3.

“For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”—*Matt.* xii. 37.

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PREFACE.



WE have always admired the picture of the man setting out on pilgrimage, as drawn by Bunyan in his *Immortal Dream*. When his dearest friends "began to cry after him to return he put his fingers in his ears and ran on crying 'Life! Life! eternal life.'" And it is, we trust, in this spirit, unbiassed by any mere human authority or personality, we have written on the subject of the "*Higher Criticism*." We are acquainted with Mr. *Worldly Wise-man* and the other notable characters met by *Christian*, and they are undoubtedly as brisk and numerous as ever they were in Bunyan's day. Were we, however, to compare personality on the evangelical side with personality on the side of the *Critical School*, it would be easy, we think, to show a vast preponderance of intellectuality, not to speak of higher qualities, in men of this century on the side of the former. But

all such comparisons are to be avoided. The only sound position must be to stand by the witness of God against the whole world, if need be. Although a Presbyterian, it is in the one spirit of love and unity with the whole Christian brotherhood that the writer offers this humble, earnest contribution towards the arrest and removal of the infidelity which, under the guise of progress in religion, has done havoc in the Churches, and still threatens to undermine and destroy the Christian faith.

I.

THE FALSITY OF THE POSITION OF THE "HIGHER CRITICS."

THE "Higher Critics" are now a formidable body in the theological world. They are numerous, and considering the actual position they have taken up—which we believe to be to themselves especially a most dangerous one—they are very influential, and by the strenuous and widespread advocacy of their views, great multitudes have been affected by them. The most advanced are chiefly to be found in the Universities, Colleges, and Divinity Halls. We might give a long list of prominent names, but this is unnecessary. They are recognisable almost everywhere. In the pulpit, and in general literature, not even excluding some of the religious periodicals, the unmistakable trend of the "Higher Critic" is forcibly felt. They exhibit marked variety of character and degrees of

advancement as critics of Holy Scripture; but they wonderfully agree to differ, as we generally find them lauding and praising each other, when opportunity offers, as some new rationalistic ideas are promulgated from time to time. And they all point in one direction, and may well, therefore, be regarded as practically united in the work in which they are engaged.

What, then, we enquire, is the important mission the "Higher Critics" have undertaken?

Their work, briefly stated, is nothing less than an endeavour to prove that the Old Testament Scriptures—and these Scriptures are acknowledged to be the same now as in the time of our Lord—are unreliable; that they are largely composed of legend and myth; that the historical, prophetic, and other writings of the Book are full of mistakes and errors; and that in not a few instances the reputed authors of the books of the Old Testament are not the real authors. It is further stated that it is only by superior scholarship, by intimate acquaintance with ancient literature, and by certain scientific methods, which exclusively belong to the "Higher Critics," that the real truth of what is contained in the Bible can be ascertained.

Such is, in short, the nature of the work and strivings of these men. But in reading their works, so far as we have been able or deem it desirable to do so, we find that their conclusions

as a whole coincide very remarkably with the rationalistic writers of an older generation. Upwards of a hundred years ago—not to refer to infidelity of a much earlier period—we find that the same views of Old Testament Scripture were held, among others, by such men as Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Paine.* The views of these rationalists of last century, although expressed perhaps more explicitly, are in reality identical with what we see declared by the leading “Higher Critics” of the present day. The modern “Higher Critics,” however, would persuade us that it is from their own position, as learned “*experts*,” that they are now able to

* BOLINGBROKE—*Chapter on Sacred History*, 1735. “These histories “are nothing more than compilations of old traditions and abridgment “of old records made at later times. These Scriptures are “full of additions, interpolations and transpositions made, we know not “when nor by whom.”

VOLTAIRE—*On the History between Kings and Chronicles*, 1761. “See “on what pretexts, on what facts, on what miracles, on what predictions, “on what basis this disgusting and abominable history is built.” *Important Examination*, 1767. Chapter IX. “The most probable opinion “is that the books attributed to Solomon, to Daniel, and to others, were “made in Alexandria.”

PAINE—*Theological Works*, 1795. Page 107. “I do not suppose that “the compilers of the Bible made these books (Isaiah, etc.), but rather “that they picked up some loose anonymous essays and put them together “under the names of such authors as best suited their purpose.” Page 108. “A very glaring instance of this occurs in the book ascribed to Isaiah; the “latter part of the forty-fourth chapter and the beginning of the forty-fifth, “so far from having been written by Isaiah, could only have been written “by some person who lived at least one hundred and fifty years after “Isaiah was dead.”

NOTE.—In quoting the above, we virtually quote the modern “Higher Critics,” as anyone may see who examines the writings of the latter. Prof. G. A. Smith’s work on Isaiah, for example, must lose much of its distinctive marks of supposed originality and value, in view of the older utterances of infidelity.

arrive at the conclusions they have so largely given to the world. But we feel bound, in view of the facts above stated, to question the validity of such distinctive claim. Any candid reader, we think, can scarcely give them credit for exclusive right to the alleged discoveries, seeing the earlier rationalists we refer to, who did not profess like scholastic attainments, made the same declarations respecting the Scriptures. And if there is to be honour distributed among the critics, this honour should be given to whom honour is due—namely, to the earlier discoverers, such as those writers we have mentioned, and others of their time.

There is, however, to be specially noted a very marked difference in one respect between the professed personal beliefs of the modern “Higher Critics” and of those others we have just named. And it is to this singular circumstance or distinction to which we wish to ask the reader’s special attention. Those rationalistic writers of last century concluded, and very logically so, that the discovery of errors and fable as they supposed in the Old Testament, completely shattered all belief also in the New Testament Scripture. On the contrary, however, the present day “Higher Critics”—we speak of them generally—profess to believe in the great truths and doctrines of the New Testament. There is here, therefore, a most surprising difference between the professed attitude of the *Old* and

that of the *New Critics*, and it is consequently of very great importance, is it not, to determine the precise position of the modern "Higher Critics."

This profession of continued belief in the New Testament facts—although many of the "Higher Critics" express doubts here also—has the appearance of reverence and worshipful homage of the true God. But we venture to affirm that on close examination of the statements of the modern "Higher Critics" regarding Old Testament Scripture, it will be impossible to allow them the credit they claim in this matter. And we feel bound in fairness to say that the Older Critics referred to were much more consistent, because, if it is proved that the Old Testament is untrue, as the modern "Higher Critics" declare, then it necessarily follows that the New Testament is untrue also, and that thus Our Lord and His Apostles and New Testament writers who believed the Old Testament to be infallibly true, are made the deliberate propagators of error and falsehood.

This singular attempt, therefore, on the part of present day "Higher Critics" to reconcile their attack on the Old Testament with their professed belief in the New Testament, must be pronounced nothing short of an incredible miracle. Do the modern "Higher Critics," we ask, believe that our Lord cast doubts upon the truth of the Old Testament Scripture? We do not find it so. The

very opposite is the case. They uniformly own that our Lord constantly referred to the Old Testament as indisputable truth, showing and declaring that every prophetic utterance therein must needs be fulfilled, and that "the Scripture cannot be broken." In the face of these manifest facts we must again say that the professed position of the modern "Higher Critic" is an exceedingly inconsistent and untenable one. And when it is calmly looked into, we greatly wonder how he can permit himself to rest on such a foundation of sand.

But we wish to press the matter towards a point. When we find our "Higher Critics" admit, as they do, that our Lord quoted and referred to Old Testament Scripture, and that most pointedly to several portions of it which they repudiate or treat as fable or myth, we want to know how they reconcile such contradiction of Christ with their professed belief in Him as the true and only Saviour of the world? It has been said that the explanation by certain critics of our Lord's testimony to the truth of the Old Testament is, that He spoke either under ordinary human limitations, and, as a man, was not fully acquainted with the science of the subject, or that He chose to accommodate Himself in His Scripture references to what was simply the common belief among the people of the time. Such are the blasphemous explanations, as we must

regard them, attributed to the so-called "Higher Critics." But whether these dark counsels belong to them or not, or whether they have any explanation to give for our Lord's solemn asseverations respecting the absolute truth of Old Testament Scripture, *they cannot get quit of the great outstanding fact of their evident and persistent opposition to Him in regard to these Scriptures.* This is simply a case calling for just judgment by the living Church of God on the evidence available. It is nothing more and nothing less than this, and it is, we maintain, a matter of such gravity that the withholding of that judgment must bespeak unfaithfulness to an imperative Christian duty.

Let us endeavour, therefore, to realize how the "Higher Critics" actually stand personally in this their attitude towards our Lord. So far as ascertained they admit that our Lord never either by word or act cast doubt upon a single jot or tittle of Holy Scripture. And if anyone thinks otherwise it only shows he is ignorant of Him and of His teaching. In direct contrast to such a suggestion, however, they, and all who have any acquaintance with the subject, acknowledge that one very special feature of our Lord's teaching and testimony was the unqualified emphasis He placed on Scripture from beginning to end. And we do not doubt it was in anticipation of the evil spirit of infidelity, among other reasons, which

led Him so frequently to call attention to its authority and preciousness, thus putting His Sovereign stamp upon every word which it contained.

This being so, and the position of the "Higher Critics" being as shown, we wish to summon them before the bar of common rectitude for examination.

They are perfectly aware and acknowledge, as already said, that our Lord believed in the Scripture, and made constant reference to it as infallibly true. There is no escaping the evidence on the point. We have, therefore, the duty laid upon us, and all who are interested in the truth, to see if their professions will bear investigation. They hold, they say, to Christ as the true and only Saviour of the world, and that they worship and rely on Him alone for salvation. This is undoubtedly the profession of the "Higher Critics," for many of them preach, occasionally at least, and speak from texts taken from both Old and New Testaments to show their professed belief, and to ask others to believe with them. We scarcely require to give specimens of what we refer to, their professions and teaching being well known in almost every Church circle, but we will introduce and treat of one sample only of the "Higher Criticism" taken from a book entitled "Studies in Theology," by a much respected theologian, the Rev. James Denney, D.D., who has

been very generally pronounced one of the most evangelical of the "Higher Critics." Referring to the opening chapters of Genesis, which contain the account of the Creation and the Fall, this writer declares these chapters to be "neither science nor history," but "myth," and he explicitly thus writes:—"The plain truth, and we have no reason to hide it, is, that we do not know the beginnings of man's life, of his history, of his sin." And again he says—"We do not know the beginnings of man's life on historical evidence, and we should be content to let them remain in the dark till science throws what light it can upon them."

These are startling statements from this lauded theologian, and to show how such views differ from the testimony of our Lord concerning the contents of these chapters in Genesis, we will simply give the following remarks of an able and thoughtful writer which bring out this very distinctly. "We are simply amazed," this writer remarks, "when we consider how the words of Jesus have grasped almost the entire range of the Old Testament history, and have embedded it in the New. When Pharisees came tempting Him with the question, *Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?* He answered and said unto them: *Have ye not read, that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this*

“*cause shall a man leave father and mother, and*
 “*shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be*
 “*one flesh?* (Matt. xix. 4, 5.) What did the
 “question mean? Was there not an amount of
 “blame in it for not having duly marked an
 “authoritative statement which really made an end
 “of all question regarding this matter? But our
 “Lord has left no room for doubt as to His mean-
 “ing, for He founded His decision upon the words.
 “*Wherefore, said He, they are no more twain,*
 “*but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined*
 “*together, let not man put asunder* (verse 6).
 “Our Lord’s argument has force in it only upon
 “one supposition, that those words, taken from
 “the first and second chapters of Genesis, are the
 “words of God. But it is plain that our Lord
 “believed the quotation not only to have force in
 “it, but also to be absolutely conclusive. The
 “words are, therefore, quoted as the words of
 “God Himself.”

Then, we may add that all the New Testament
 writers follow our Lord closely and with entire
 unity in their treatment of the Old Testament.
 The Apostle Paul, for example, refers over and
 over again to these very statements in Genesis
 which the “Higher Critic” we refer to calls
 “myth.” The Apostle thus writes—“The first
 “man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last
 “Adam was made a quickening spirit. For as
 “by one man’s disobedience many were made

“sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” But we need not multiply the references to the narrative of these great foundation facts, which, in contrast to our Lord’s declarations, the critic calls “myth” and unhistorical.

Further quotations from this so-called evangelical “Higher Critic” might be given to show his unbelief in other portions of Scripture, but the above may be deemed sufficient as an example of the writer’s position, and we will only give a very curious declaration of his ideas in regard to the reading of Scripture. It is this :—“The witness,” he says, “of the Spirit by and with the Word in the soul does not guarantee the historicity of miraculous details, but it does guarantee the presence of a supernatural element in the history recorded. It bars out a criticism which denies the supernatural on principle and refuses to recognise a unique work of God as in process along this line.”

Now this author has stated in his writings referred to, that there are errors all through Scripture, but it will be seen from the above quotation how he says the truthful element is to be extracted. The declaration, however, which the writer makes about the “witness of the Spirit” in the soul is a most remarkable one, but when the quotation is carefully considered, we make bold to say that such an experience as that

expressed by him has not been found within the Church of God, past or present. Let us examine the statement we have quoted.

In the first place, we enquire, how is it that the Spirit, as the writer asserts, is so given that the reader of Scripture can know what is true and what is untrue (for that is the import of the writer's statement), and yet, that the same Spirit was not given to the writer of that same Scripture to enable him to write it correctly? In short, how is it that man by the Spirit could not or did not *write* the mind of the Spirit without error, but that by the same Spirit man, according to this writer, can, in spite of the many errors in it, *read* it correctly? When such a statement as that in question is therefore placed under a fair logical and reasonable test, it must, we think, be regarded as the expression of an experience purely artificial and imaginary. Then, in the same quotation, it is to be noted that the writer appears to say that the Spirit rejects the "miraculous details" in Scripture, but discerns "the presence of a supernatural element." Why not guarantee the "miraculous details"? We cannot have anything without details, can we? Whether it may be a complete or abridged statement, there must be details in any case, and we cannot have anything perfect unless the details are perfect. But it is the "miraculous details" which we presume is the difficulty. With the miraculous expunged all

will be plain, will it? That is not what is meant, evidently, because it is owned by the writer that there is an "element" of the "supernatural" (another name for the miraculous) in Scripture history, but only an "element," whatever that may amount to, which is not clearly defined; only this, however, that it is said to "bar out a criticism" "which denies the supernatural on principle and" "refuses to recognise a unique work of God as in" "process along this line."

There seems to us in the concluding sentence here a sort of puzzlement, or may we not regard it as a kind of rhetorical "myth"? Whatever may be the exact intention of the writer, it is evident, at least, that he believes he has found a bar to exclude those, we suppose, whom he elsewhere calls the "irresponsible" critics. As the bar indicated, however, has limitations only known to the writer himself, it is therefore, we fear, unknowable or invisible to the ordinary reader of Scripture. There might as well be no such device, as all the "Higher Critics," both those who believe in the "supernatural element" and those who do not believe in it, are sure to commingle. And we suspect, so far as the safety of Scripture truth is concerned, the one set of critics—taking the above as a specimen of the best—is about as good as the other. When coming upon the familiar sacred words, "witness of the Spirit," we would expect some *bonâ-fide* statement in

harmony with them, but, instead, they seem only to serve for the gilding of an idea of the writer's own, which, we believe, has no support whatever in Holy Writ.*

We have thus noticed one out of the many examples of the "Higher Critics" which might be taken to show their opposition to the plain emphatic teaching of our Lord in regard to Old Testament Scripture. We would now proceed more directly to remark that our great concern is to see how it can be possible for men, consistently with the admission of such views, *to believe in Christ as their Redeemer*. If they contradict our Lord respecting the truth of Scripture—and the evidence of this is beyond doubt—they necessarily declare themselves superior to Him in knowledge, that His teaching was erroneous respecting Scripture, and that He thus misled the people on most important articles of faith and duty. We cannot, therefore, we hold, in view of these facts, be justified in accepting the profession of faith in our Lord by the "Higher Critics" as a *genuine* profession.

If such conflicting views respecting Scripture had come from ignorant or partially instructed persons, excuse might in charity have been found for their unwitting opposition to Christ,

*NOTE.—It may be noted here, by the way, that one of the worst features of the Critics appears now to be the attempt to make the Apostolic teaching conflict with the teaching of our Lord. The depth of this perversity it would be difficult to fathom.

but in the case of the "Higher Critics" no such excuse can be urged on their behalf. In full view of the circumstances and facts, it is clearly, we hold, an impossibility for such men *in any true sense to believe and rest upon Christ alone for salvation*. We put the question calmly to any sincere upright man of intelligence: How could he rely upon a Saviour with such imperfections and making such misrepresentations respecting Scripture as the "Higher Critics" by their writings declare He has done? The idea is utterly preposterous. No man of ordinary sanity of mind could believe that any person who held such views respecting our Lord *could really worship Him in spirit and in truth*. Is this not the only conclusion to be arrived at? Is there any way of escape here for the "Higher Critic"? *Is it possible that he can in such case be walking in fellowship with our Lord?* The supposition is evidently out of the question; yet he makes this profession. But any sober reflection on the nature of the case must lead to the inevitable and painful discovery that the thing is impossible. For, to hold that a genuine profession of faith in Christ, along with rejection of His teaching on such momentous matters, can co-exist in the heart and soul of the same person, is distinctly not only against every principle of logic, but an outrage on the common laws of judgment and conscience.

This is not a case, as some may imagine,

which is to be judged of on the principle of placing an evil work over against a supposed good work and striking the balance between them. Some may say, if the work of the "Higher Critics" be incorrect and evil let it be charged against them; and also, if they profess to rely on and worship our Lord notwithstanding, let them be credited accordingly. But the sophistry of such a proposition must be very apparent, because the professed relationship of the "Higher Critics" to our Lord must determine their every action. For, to do otherwise, would be to hold that a man may deliberately and of set purpose serve God and the devil alternately, and be blameless.

It is a fearful act, is it not, to speak in opposition to our Lord in any wise? Only consider it. He was not only declared a perfect man and without sin, but the Holy Ghost was upon Him *without measure* from the beginning of His public ministry among men. He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. Then, He was God as well as man, hence His knowledge was unlimited and unerring. Was He not the very Truth itself? And did He not possess more wisdom and knowledge than the whole human race combined ever had or ever can have? Who dare doubt it? If He is the God whom the "Higher Critics" profess to believe in, He must necessarily occupy this exalted

position in their esteem. They know that there is no neutral position here for them to take up, and on either horn of the dilemma they choose they must be held condemned. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." It is never to be forgotten also that He spoke largely of Scripture after His resurrection, and opened the minds of His disciples to understand the Scriptures. Mark the words: "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 45). And what He did on this occasion He continued to do, and still continues to do through the Holy Spirit, according to His promise. The whole New Testament itself is the most signal proof of that divine operation on the minds of His chosen apostles and teachers, and it is but the simple well-known truth to say that in every great awakening among men through the power of the Holy Spirit from that day to this, there has ever been, along with supreme love to God, an intensified confidence in Holy Scripture as inerrant from beginning to end. And in comparison with this testimony of experience, is it likely, we ask, that the "Higher Critic" is of those whose understanding has been so opened? And do his writings and teaching all testify to the truth of such a divine operation upon himself? All evidence, alas, declares the contrary. If, on

the other hand, the "Higher Critic" had been so possessed and moved by the Holy Spirit, he would certainly have shown an entirely different attitude towards the Word of God. He would have been more like unto the Apostle John, who, when in vision he beheld the Son of man, "fell at His feet as dead."

But as we survey the actual situation occupied by the "Higher Critics," and reflect on their case, it becomes difficult whether most to regard them with contempt or pity, as the whole features thus disclosed to us present, indeed, little other than that of a systematic hypocrisy.

And, in concluding this indictment, we would summarily emphasize the manifest unreality of the profession of Christianity on the part of the "Higher Critics."

Notwithstanding all their writings and teaching in contradiction of Christ respecting the Old Testament Scriptures, they yet, apparently without a blush, come forward and boldly assert that they seek to have the mind of Christ and to be His true and faithful witnesses. In other words, they profess to occupy the holy and blessed position of the Spouse of Christ. But the proof of this, alas, is sadly wanting.

Their great cry has been for liberty, and they have taken it. Not, however, the liberty wherewith Christ maketh free, but the liberty—may we not say—of the libertine. They have had what

we may designate their "high places," call them chairs of Apologetics, or of Science, or whatever name you choose, but to these "high places" have they taken their supreme Lord and Master with them? Rather, do we not see Him completely ignored therein, and instead, a display of all the characteristics of the unfaithful, disobedient, and adulterous spirit? These features time after time have appeared in the Churches of late years, springing from the sources alluded to. And we have, we think, observed leaders, in certain Churches at least, who have striven hard by all the delicate ingenuities of compromise and time-service to condone the flagrant and fatal corruption. But we believe, on the very highest grounds, no cloak can ever be woven by the most skilful leaders or standard-bearers which will cover up the foul spectacle of this great Apostasy. And it only requires ordinary Christian intelligence to see that, in whatever Church the so-called "Higher Criticism" is taught and embraced, that Church has already fallen, and must necessarily decay and die.

II.

THE WORTHLESS CHARACTER OF THE WORK OF THE "HIGHER CRITICS."

THE great impelling motive in our reading and study of the Scriptures should be—it is doubtless admitted—love of the truth. And under the influence of the Divine Spirit we naturally turn to our Lord, the source and manifestation of love and truth, the infallible example and guide in all our enquiries and research. We should not be ashamed to confess that our standard of appeal on all questions of belief must be the words of our Lord from first to last. And in every difficulty which may arise, our chief enquiry should ever be, What has He declared regarding these Scriptures? and also, which is the same thing, What have His Apostles and other divinely inspired New Testament writers and teachers said of them? Thus we feel

bound to declare that we dare not form any opinion contrary to our Lord respecting these Scriptures; and by this attitude it will be seen and admitted that the final and only sure settlement of this whole matter of Scripture truth, turns, after all, upon the question of supreme authority. It will therefore be at once apparent that we cannot admit the "Higher Critics," nor any other conclave of men, not divinely inspired, however great and varied their acquirements or pretensions, to settle any question which may arise or may be put forward in connection with the truth of Scripture, whether as regards its historical or doctrinal contents.

We make these remarks because there has been a growing tendency on the part of the "Higher Critics" to assume an exclusive right to dictate to the ordinary reader what he is to believe and what he is not to believe concerning Scripture. Such a claim, however, no serious, intelligent reader can entertain for a moment. But it may be proper and useful to look into the nature of the particular work of the "Higher Critics." And we would, therefore, proceed briefly to enquire as to the truth or falsehood of the alleged discoveries of error and fable in the Scriptures. Have the "Higher Critics," then, we ask, proved that the Old Testament Scriptures are either legendary or incorrect, as they have all in many instances assumed and declared? The

answers we have from themselves appear to be that they are not sure of having absolutely proved any one of their assertions, and it is evident that *assumptions* on their part are to be taken for their proofs.

It is, however, to be acknowledged that they have exhibited by certain processes of criticism a very abundant quantity of alleged discrepancies, errors and "myths." By these new processes they have opened up a rich literary field, of a kind, for themselves, and the work produced by them in that new field being now so large and imposing, they have become in many quarters singularly confident and daring. By their mutual acknowledgment of each other in whatever amount of conjecture they severally produce, they appear to conclude, notwithstanding the entire absence of proof, that their work must be right.

Now, while it is true the results of the "Higher Criticism" have been widely disseminated, and many have weakly and sadly fallen under its specious and seductive influence, it is at the same time becoming more and more evident to earnest and thoughtful enquirers on the subject that the work of the "Higher Critics" is made up of presumption and pretension. And it is found that there is not only no proof of their declarations against the accuracy and truth of Old Testament Scripture, but that some of their strongest and most plausible positions, on which they had been

building their mountains of guess-work, have given way and been completely overthrown by recent discoveries, the absolute truth of the Scripture being anew confirmed.

Professor Sayce, who is probably the very greatest authority on Archæology, and who has now found out the errors of the "Higher Criticism," thus writes in his "*Patriarchal Palestine*":—"Monumental research," he remarks, "is making it clearer every day that the scepticism of the 'so-called '*Higher Criticism*' is not justified in fact." Again he says, "While criticism, so-called, has been busy in demolishing the records of the Pentateuch, Archæology, by the spade of the excavator and the patient skill of the decipherer, has been equally busy in restoring their credit; and the monuments of the past are a more solid argument than the guesses and prepossessions of the modern theorist. The clay tablet and inscribed stone are better witnesses to the truth than literary tact or critical scepticism. That Moses and his contemporaries could neither read nor write may have been proved to demonstration by the critic; yet nevertheless we now know, thanks to Archæological discovery, that it would have been a miracle if the critic were right. The Pentateuch is, after all, what it professes to be, and the records it contains are history and not romance."

The most that the "Higher Critics" have done has been to exhibit their inventive powers in what can be written on certain theoretical principles, adopted and applied by them within the fields of a so-called literature and science in reference to Old Testament Scripture, and by such methods have produced a great number and variety of new ideas. They allege they have found a vast number of different authors, not the reputed authors, who have had part in the composition of the books of the Old Testament. They can, they seem to say, discover the beginnings and endings of the several writers, and these are so numerous that they have had to draw considerably from the letters of the alphabet to have these authors duly marked and recognised. This kind of work, however ingenious, can never be regarded as at all trustworthy, and indeed may well be treated, from what we now know, as absolutely absurd. If these methods of the "Higher Critics" were adopted in reference to the writings of almost any well known author of celebrity, any reader of such works might find a plurality of authorship. Nearly every author has much variety of expression and style, according to subject and circumstances. Take, for example, that of Sir Walter Scott, how diversified his works and course of life. It would be discovered by the critic, acting on the above principle, that the Scott who wrote "Marmion" could not

be the author of "The Tales of a Grandfather." The man who wrote "Waverley" and the "Heart of Midlothian" could not be the man who sat as judge in the Sheriff Court; and the man who followed the hounds and loved his dogs so ardently must be a different person from any one of these.

The "Higher Critics" do not tell us all the names and individual history of those supposed writers they thus discover. This might be too much to expect, although we do not see why they should not on similar hypothesis give us a complete history of such hitherto undiscovered authors. But there is one important item of information they generally appear careful to suggest—namely, that there are grave doubts as to most of the reputed authors having in almost any case written much of the books which stand in their name. A very notable instance of this denial of authorship on the part of the critics is their reference to Moses, to which we have previously alluded. They have all demonstrated to their own satisfaction, evidently, for some years now, that Moses did not, and indeed could not, write the Pentateuch, as writing was then entirely unknown, but that about 700 or 800 years after his time, when the art of writing came into use, some author or authors wrote the books of the Pentateuch, and by forgery attached the name of Moses thereto. Such is an example of the

splendid work done by our superlatively wise men of light and leading. We believe, however, owing to recently well-established facts of history disclosed by the Archæologist on the point, the "Higher Critics" will be absolutely obliged to allow Moses to come back again to the place he originally stood, and as represented in the Pentateuch itself.

But when Moses is allowed to take his former rightful place, where then, we ask, should the critics have their situation? When robbers are caught and the goods stolen are restored to their owner, does the matter end there? We may be sure that although the "Higher Critics" may thus despise and defy the law of Moses they will yet have to reckon with it. And shall they still go on in such work? The statements, all new and wonderful, by the critics, are, we presume, now so large and daily increasing that to attempt to enumerate or classify them adequately is hardly possible, and although the whole is *de facto* an accumulation of sophistry and doubt, we are nevertheless expected to hail their work with thankfulness and admiration. But to this we know every true believer in the Word of God will entirely demur, and feel bound to offer an unqualified protest. From what we have already seen done at the hands of the "Higher Critics" we become increasingly convinced that all the alleged discoveries in Scripture, of interpolations

and errors of every description, are to be rejected, because the allegations are all founded upon the varied conjecture and hypothesis adopted by these critics. And as the theories are under the personal control of the individual critic, it is but fair to say that the theory in each case must be made to do duty in accordance with the purpose of its maker. The results, therefore, of such work must be estimated according to its proved worth or worthlessness.

If, for example, these respectable and serious "Higher Critics," as they have been characterized, were summoned before a judge in any of our Courts of Justice to produce their proofs of alleged errors in the Scriptures, it would be found that such evidence as they are dealing out in shoals to the public would not for a moment be regarded as admissible. Their voluminous speculations, with attempted alterations of writings of from 2,000 to 5,000 or 6,000 years old, may indeed be a great curiosity to those who have no other interest in such work. What they thus produce, so to speak, out of their own "inner consciousness," or what one of themselves calls "Spiritual instinct"—the voices of the ancient monuments and tablets crying out all the while against them—may well be a wonder of the world, and they may deserve a niche among the most ingenious writers of fiction in this or any age. But as for their suppositions, all unproved, or

rather disproved, which they give forth continually, when subjected to careful judicial examination, none, we conclude, but the most credulous of mankind could place upon them the slightest reliance.

It is very remarkable that men like the "Higher Critics," who have had, we can believe, in most instances, much experience in the common affairs of life, should so readily reject the history and general statements contained in Scripture. Apart even from the unerring guidance of the Divine Spirit, it seems most unwise to doubt the truth of any portion of Scripture because of the mere semblance of error therein. Their own individual experience, limited though in a sense it must be, one would have thought would have taught them great caution. For they must know how often in daily life many alleged errors and contradictions arise, even of a most extraordinary kind, which, but for the necessary explanation, would produce, and often do produce, erroneous beliefs and impressions. Very striking examples of the kind are to be found less or more in the lives of parents and their children. It has often occurred that some incident or remark indelibly fixed in the mind of a child has remained there under entirely false meaning until the child grew to maturity, when a fuller understanding completely removed the misapprehension. If, therefore, there can be no excuse for a child under such circum-

stances doubting the action or word of a worthy parent, how infinitely less excusable must the child of larger growth be in doubting the words or acts—though not understood—of the Eternal and All-wise Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We have, so far, been assuming that we are arguing with truth-seekers. But, while many of the leading "Higher Critics" may be regarded as sincere in their attachment to certain views of their school, it would be positively against the clearest evidence adduced were we to regard all the leaders in that light. If Voltaire, or Paine, and some others were sincere men, it may be said they were sincerely wicked. We are willing to admit that many of the followers of the modern "Higher Critics" are doubtless sincere and the innocent victims of others, but it would not be true to say that the pioneers or founders of the "Higher Criticism" were free from the gravest suspicions as to their perfect honesty of purpose. Take for example the great representative leader of the "Higher Criticism," Wellhausen. What do we find from his great book, the "Prolegomena"? Let anyone carefully read the critique of that book by Dr. W. L. Baxter, and follow out in patient detail the evidence produced, and he will discover a perfect mine of hollowness and unveracity. Dr. Baxter, in his book, "Sanctuary and Sacrifice," has given a masterly reply to Wellhausen's criticism of the Old Testament. He has examined the

“Higher Criticism” theories in minute detail from point to point on Wellhausen’s own ground, and any ordinary reader, as the author himself states, can form his own judgment on the subject. From an evidently intense dislike of everything Divine and unerring in the sacred books of Scripture, Wellhausen has set himself with all his powers of ingenuity and audacity to work out his theories and hypotheses, which, if true, would subvert and set aside the whole Divine authority and credibility claimed for Scripture. And to effect his purpose he has not hesitated to work out his imaginative views by the adoption of something like three several delusive principles. (1.) He deletes or cuts out certain portions of Scripture which stand too directly in the way of his theories, and he does this without giving the slightest ground of proof to justify his doing so. (2.) He frequently refers to various verses, chapters, and books of Scripture as supporting his theories, but which Scriptures when examined condemn his argument, and at the very most, by being twisted from their true meaning, give only an appearance of support. (3.) And he further, in striking instances, does not even hesitate to contradict himself in order to cover the defects which crop up in his work. In short, by mutilation and twisting of Scripture, along with other ideas of imagination wrought into it, the work stands complete as a decoy from the truth of Divine revelation.

The facts witnessing against Wellhausen's inventions referred to are so very numerous that they are to be counted by the reader in hundreds.

That such a work should have imposed on men of reputed high scholarship in this country is very extraordinary. But this ready acquiescence to follow in the lines of Wellhausen may, we think, be accounted for to some extent from the fact that the style of his writing is so subtle and the audacity so unwavering. And it may not, therefore, be so very surprising after all that some men who have had, it may be, a greater thirst for the secular than the sacred, should, in reading the "Prolegomena" have failed to examine at the same time with the utmost care—and this is most essential—the whole Scripture facts bearing on the subject in hand. We have no intention of going into the details treated so ably by Dr. Baxter, but we earnestly commend the examination of his exhaustive work on Wellhausen, because it may be said, without exaggeration, that the "Prolegomena," vouched to be the standard work of the "Higher Criticism" by no less a name than that of the late Professor W. Robertson Smith, has been thoroughly pulverized. And we believe no candid reader of Dr. Baxter's exposure of the work will henceforth be able to rely on anything which that German writer may produce.

One of the "Higher Critics'" usually professed strongholds, as we have already indicated, is his

boasted acquaintance with Hebrew and ancient literature; but this claim, put forth by them and frequently dangled, as it were, before the eyes of the ordinary Bible reader, has been found quite unwarrantable from the facts of the case. We do not attempt to enter into any detailed argument, which is unnecessary, but let *Kuenen*, another of the great leading pioneer "Higher Critics," give his declaration on this important point. He has written thus (*Modern Review*, July 1880): "The critic does not profess to find any additional documents inaccessible to the laity, nor does he profess to find anything in his Bible that the ordinary reader cannot see. It is true that here and there he improves the common translation: but this is the exception, not the rule. And yet he dares to form a conception of Israel's religious development totally different from that which, as anyone may see, is set forth in the Old Testament, and to sketch the primitive Christianity in lines which even the acutest reader cannot recognise in the new."

Such is the candid confession of the "Higher Critics," which clearly warrants us in identifying them with the older rationalists. And from this confession, as anyone may note, we get a glimpse into the limitations and impotence of the "Higher Critics." If they have, as they admit, the same Scripture which is equally accessible to the ordinary reader, how comes it that they take the

liberties they do in deleting portions of it, and also of reading into it totally different ideas from those which the text, as it stands, will admit? Do they claim a special induement of the Divine Spirit in the execution of such work; and are we to wait on them, as on the chosen Prophets of Old, for direction? Their claims for themselves are doubtless great and diverse. They claim to be Scholars, Philosophers, Scientists, and even to possess occult powers, in some instances; hence all ordinary readers of the Scriptures must place confidence in them. This is a revived priestcraft, in a new form, which has invaded the Protestant Churches; and no doubt man in his natural state, who finds the Word of God charging him with guilt—and this is a universal experience whenever the true light enters the soul—sometimes too readily takes refuge in the unbelieving devices of the “Higher Criticism.” It is a solace to him, even on the mere word of another, dressed with a little self-imposed authority, to be informed that the Scriptures are not true, and that he is a very much better person than these Scriptures represent him to be. But we are sure no earnest seeker of the truth, and the truth only, can be satisfied with the pretentious claims to superior wisdom on the part of the “Higher Critics.” We are bound, therefore, to cross-question our so-called learned “experts” in regard to their treatment of the text of Holy Scripture. They say,

as we have seen from one of their greatest leaders, that they have exactly the same Scripture as that of the ordinary reader. If so, on what authority do they alter the text? Their usual reply is that the compilers, copyists, redactors, so-called, etc., made changes in the original, and they, the Critics, are now putting the matter right. It may be easy for the Critics to make such statements, but is there any truth in them? We have often wondered greatly how they have arrived at their various, and not seldom, contradictory conclusions. It is now clearly shown, as stated by Professor Sayce, that the art of writing *was known* and largely in use in the time of Moses, and that the deciphering of ancient monuments and tablets recently dug up confirms the truth of the Pentateuch. But we are deeply interested and eager to know how the Critics have obtained their information? What kind of evidence (if any) have they relied upon in making the statements they have so often done, and on which they have built up their neological structure? Who or what witnesses have they in proof of the alleged errors and romance in Scripture, and to justify the additions they read into it?

If, according to the "Higher Critics' " own declarations, there were no writings extant till long after the time of Moses, contemporary history is out of the question, and no witnesses therefore from such imagined sources can be

produced. Then, as we know, the Archæologist, a most important witness, is also against them. Where then is their evidence for evidence we presume they at least profess to have? They would not write so confidently their repudiation of Scripture unless they had some persuasive evidence in support of their allegations. Having no aid, however, from the discoveries of the Archæologist, and also none from ancient contemporary history, all tangible evidence must therefore, it is apparent, be extremely circumscribed. But the persuasive in the case is not altogether wanting, and their resources are greater than most would imagine. For we find they have one or perhaps two witnesses which we believe they rely upon and put forward in support of their alleged discoveries of error and fable in Scripture; but we fear, on examination of these, they will have to be classed under the category of false witnesses. We refer to their reliance upon "*inner consciousness*," and also a so-called "*Spiritual instinct*." It may well be asked, Are these, after all, as they really appear to be, the chief, if not the sole witnesses the "Higher Critics" have in proof of their extraordinary criticism of Holy Scripture?

Now, we do not despise either of these witnesses if they are absolutely perfect. If *evolution* were a fact, as many have taught, and not simply a plausible delusion, and if it were further the fact

that man had now, even in a single instance, through an evolutionary process, attained to absolute perfection, then it would naturally follow that his "*inner consciousness*" would be reliable, and from that shrine of perfection the utterance would be truth, and truth only. Hence we can believe that if the "Higher Critics" have attained to such perfection of being, we are safe in accepting their every statement as unchallengeable. But are we prepared, is anyone prepared, to exalt the "Higher Critics," either singly or in their combined attainments, to such a pinnacle? Who dare exalt man to such a position? Only ignorance or gross superstition can do so. Man is indeed a great mystery. To the Physiologist he is an inexhaustible source of wonder, and perhaps more so to the Philosopher or Metaphysician. But the more fully he is understood, the more certainly is it found that he has in no single instance been evolved to a state of perfection, and that, moreover, the expectation of attaining perfection through such a process is a hopeless one. On the other hand, according to *the Scripture account of man*, we discover a totally different history from that we have just referred to. We find that he was at first created by God in perfect innocence, and in the Divine image, but through the great temptation of the Evil One, he, of his own free will, sinned and fell, and from that moment, and ever since, has been in a state of alienation from

God, and that only through the great and complete atonement provided by God Himself for Sin, and through being born again of the Divine Spirit, can he take one single step towards perfection. Thus it is with man that, while remaining in what is called his natural state (the fallen corrupted nature ineradicably remaining in him), he is under condemnation of God, and is morally and spiritually dead. And those who experimentally know most of man, and have penetrated deepest into the recesses of his nature, all verify, we believe, most thoroughly the Scripture account of him. When man is created anew, regenerated of God through the Divine Spirit, it is to be remarked that, while that new creation or new Divine life in the soul is perfect, and, as the Apostle has declared, cannot sin, because it is born of God, yet, that new nature being still the dweller within the old nature or body of sin and death, man therefore can never be entirely free from sin till he becomes also the possessor of a transformed or glorified body. Many, as we know, combat this view of the history and character of the race, and so deny the depravity and lost condition of the natural man, and also deny the necessity of the new birth; but no rebellion against the truth of Scripture, so amply testified to by personal experience, will alter the facts one hair's-breadth. The very usual wrath, indeed, displayed against the testimony of the Word of God is but another

proof of the natural condition as described in that Word.*

We have here said more on the Fall and Redemption of man than might perhaps be considered essential in reference to the work of the "Higher Critics." But we have thought it may be useful and proper to make these remarks, as it will readily be seen from the Scripture account of man, as we have endeavoured to indicate, that no one in the natural state, however highly cultivated and developed his natural gifts and powers may be, can be at all reliable as an authority in regard to things Divine. We therefore reject *in toto* the dictum of "*inner consciousness*" to which some, if not most, of the "Higher Critics" lay claim, and must regard their critical utterances respecting alleged errors and romance in Scripture as so much learned ignorance, and altogether illusory. In reference to the other source of evidence which some of the "Higher Critics" rely upon—namely, "*Spiritual instinct*,"—we have only to consider the general attitude and

* NOTE.—Few, if any, deny that the human race are sinners, and even great sinners, but not a few theological teachers in these days appear to have imbibed shallow views of the *nature* of Sin, overlooking its depth and infinity, and denying eternal ruin by it. And owing mainly we believe to this—although they profess to follow Christ—they seem to teach that man may enter into and enjoy the Fatherhood of God without the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and without being born again of the Holy Spirit. The self-delusion and vain confidence thus produced are, we fear, widely prevalent. Such men have generally a new doctrine for every month of the year.

declarations of the "Higher Critics" to discover a complete condemnation of such a claim on their part. As we have found, they directly oppose our Lord and all New Testament writers in regard to Old Testament Scripture. Where then, we ask, do they obtain their "*Spiritual instinct*"? This is the crucial question. It cannot be through the same Spirit which possessed our Lord and His Apostles, otherwise there would be unity of utterance with our Lord and His Apostles on matters of such transcendent importance as that of Holy Scripture. And the pointing out of this antagonism between the Critics and our Lord is a sufficient answer to their claims to the guidance of a "*Spiritual instinct*." All who ponder the subject must be convinced that wherever the "*Spiritual instinct*" may come from, it does not and cannot possibly come from a Divine source.

It has been said that the Bible is behind the age in which we live as regards the facts of science, and some commentators, vainly imagining this, have entered into very doubtful explanations to account for seeming antagonism between science so-called and Scripture. But the Bible requires no apologist of any kind, for, while it must ever be perfectly true that the great purpose of Divine revelation is to teach the truths concerning the higher and everlasting kingdom of God, it does not ignore the laws of the kingdom

of Nature ; and as the Scripture is from the same Hand which created the material universe, its teaching is necessarily in advance of what is called science. Hence any appearance of collision with alleged scientific discoveries is owing either to the imperfection of the scientist on the one hand or of the commentator on the other.

We are not to be surprised at the rejection of Scripture either by the wise or the unwise, because we may discover the distinct counterpart of all this in the treatment which our Lord received at the hands of men while here on earth. The difficulties of men, even of His immediate friends and followers, to understand our Lord Himself should explain to us the difficulties and consequent rejection of that Scripture on which He has so often set His seal, and at the same time should apprise us of the corresponding danger attending its rejection. The mystery surrounding certain parts of Scripture may be too profound for the human understanding, and indeed it must be so, as it is from our eternal Lord. But in His presence, amid all mystery we have unbounded security, and may well be silent before Him whose love, wisdom and power are infinite and unchangeable.

It may be asked, Do we and all those who condemn the work of the "Higher Critics" find no difficulties in Scripture? Our answer, as already indicated, must be in the affirmative. But while

there are confessedly portions of these Scriptures we cannot as yet understand or fully explain, we do not doubt their truthfulness, and are sure that every seeming obscurity will in due time be entirely removed. As in the material universe we are permitted to know much, and all that may be essential to our chief good, we yet find that man, even the greatest philosopher and scientist, has to confess that he has at his best only touched the mere surface of things. What he has discovered has but inspired him with the belief that there are infinite depths of mystery in the material world all around him, into which he has not even the capacity to enter, much less to comprehend.* So also in the spiritual kingdom, which is the greatest of all. While the revelation of the mind and purpose of God has been conspicuously shown in Holy Scripture, and all that is gloriously needful for the security of man's present and eternal interests, there are yet found in these writings certain statements over which we are compelled to confess inability to comprehend aright. But all this does not and should not cause us to question their absolute truthfulness or the possibility of explanation in entire harmony

* That was a remarkable confession made by the great and venerable scientist, Lord Kelvin, at his jubilee held in Glasgow recently. "One word," he said, "characterises the most strenuous of the efforts for the advancement of science that I have made perseveringly for fifty-five years, and that word is—failure. I know no more of electric and magnetic force or of the relation between ether, electricity and ponderable matter, or of chemical affinity, than I knew fifty years ago."

with all the other facts of Scripture clearly made known. In Heaven itself, may we not say, there will be an infinity of things unknown for the redeemed to learn. Yet we know that no trace of the defilement of rebellion or doubt shall ever enter there.

And in considering further these difficulties, great or small, which arise in the study of Scripture, we have abundant reasons to counsel ourselves against impatience. When we find, as we do, the stamp of Divine authority upon them all, this should be enough to satisfy us. And besides, we may certainly look upon the portions of Scripture not yet fully understood as not only a test of the believer's faith and of his loyalty to our Lord, but also as containing, it may be, some rich treasure in reserve for all who truly wait for Him. Without referring to any merely verbal difficulties not yet clear, we would note that some of the great doctrines of Scripture, although accepted as most precious and unassailable, are nevertheless infinite in their depth of meaning, and will require eternity to exhaust their fulness. When we think of man's infinitesimal powers as contrasted with the Divine, we are not to wonder at his impotence and inability to comprehend accurately and fully either the works or words of God ; but as believers we ought to look forward to the glorious things yet to be revealed when the seals shall be opened by Him who died and rose

again and who liveth for evermore. We have had instances in our own as well as in the recorded experiences of others, have we not, of many once apparently insoluble difficulties cleared away? And there is one instance in the history of the Church surpassing all others in its momentousness which may certainly be taken, we think, as the most signal evidence that nothing is impossible with God. We refer to the mystery which surrounded the sufferings and death of Christ. Let us briefly consider it. We enter the garden of Gethsemane and follow Him to the Judgment Hall, and see Him on the Cross and then laid in the grave. What an overwhelming difficulty at that time was experienced by His immediate followers. Here was the One whom they loved, the Prince of Life, One who had walked on the sea as on dry land, by a word had fed many thousands with a few loaves and fishes, had healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and raised the dead to life. And yet, although having thus shown infinite majesty and power over the whole realm of Nature, He now appears perfectly helpless in the hands of His enemies. Do we wonder that His disciples became sad, and in their deepest perplexity were without an answer to give to His malignant persecutors when they so completely, as it seemed for the time, triumphed over Him? It is true the disciples had our Lord's

own word before these events that such a fate awaited Him. But it was, so to speak, only His word which they had to rely on, and which, in their anxiety, they scarcely understood. And, as we see, that word almost lost its power over them in the great crisis. Was there ever before or since such an insoluble difficulty experienced as in that instance concerning the word of our Lord? No human reasoning on the mystery could ever of itself have satisfied the mind and heart of the disciples during those few days prior to the Resurrection. Let anyone ponder over it, and he will enter at once into midnight darkness. What are any difficulties about any unexplained portion of Old Testament Scripture compared with this? All other enigmas sink into insignificance in comparison with it. The most loving disciples could not at the moment understand it. All the events of the few days seemed overwhelmingly against their most cherished expectations. But look at the wicked and unbelieving world. With what fiendish pleasure they exulted over the crucified One. "He saved others," they cried, "let Him save Himself if He be the Christ. Let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe Him." Such was the difficulty on the part of the followers of our Lord of holding on firmly to His bare word, and yet His word to them was true to the very letter. The triumph of the wicked at the longest is always short. In

three days, at the appointed moment, our Lord rose from the dead, and then that greatest of seeming contradictions in His life became the source of their very highest bliss, and has since and shall for ever be the central glory and song of the redeemed.

We may marvel that even the disciples did not cast away their faith altogether in the midst of such a horror of great darkness as that which overtook them in the presence of their dying Lord. But He who hung there also supplied them with the Divine grace of endurance till the great work of atonement was completed.

We see that the sufferings and death of Christ tried the faith of His followers to the very uttermost, and but for sustaining grace given to each one of them, they could not have passed through the awful ordeal in triumph. One of them, we know, suffered a grievous fall, but was restored again. We also see at the same time the real spirit of the wicked during those days of darkness. If we will just contrast the attitude of the true with the false as manifested around the Cross we will understand more perfectly the present situation in the Churches in regard to the Word of God, of which we are endeavouring to treat. That hour when Christ was entirely in the hands of His enemies may be said, we think, with truth, to have been the darkest hour to the Church of God in the history of the world. And the

difficulties of it may well be regarded as swallowing up all the other difficulties which might ever arise in the experience of the people of God. There is no doubt the brevity of the trial of great darkness has caused many to overlook its awful severity, but we should not forget it, and if under such a time of darkness the true disciple was absolutely secure, so now, amid all the doubts and denial of the word of our Lord in regard to every misunderstood or unfulfilled portion of Scripture, we ought to rest in the peaceful calm of His abiding presence without a fear.

It will be seen, therefore, from this, that while we would seek to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, we do not fear the final issue. His word concerning the infallibility of Scripture, and His word concerning the safety of every one of the redeemed and chosen in Him, are alike, and will, to the very minutest detail, be verified and made clear before assembled worlds. And even now, before such events arrive, the song of victory is being sung.

Can the "Higher Critic," we might plead, not patiently wait and watch one hour for light in his darkness? God's one day is a thousand years, and the Critic will not, so to say, wait even a few minutes for the Divine Interpreter. He must rush headlong among men at the dictates, as we believe, of a fallen nature, with the vain cry of delusion and error alleged to be in Scripture, and

that without a shred of positive proof, and against the most emphatic testimony of the Divine Master. Surely, the rationalists are the most irrational of men.

It cannot but be regarded as an unique experience in the Christian Church to find such a numerous body of men, who occupy in many instances the very highest positions in the Church, by their pronouncements undermining, as we have seen, the teaching of our Lord and His immediate followers on the all-important subject of Old Testament Scripture. The legitimate place of the "Higher Critic," as demonstrated by facts, would be that he should retire into line with the rationalists of past ages.

In spite, however, of all the evidence adduced and available against the position taken up by the Critics, we are still prepared to be told by them, as well as by many of their merely passive followers, that no one outside their "Higher Critic" circle is entitled to controvert their criticisms of Holy Scripture. This autocratic assumption we must be prepared to resist and wholly repudiate as misleading and dangerous, and one which no earnest seeker of the truth can recognise. If it had been the hierarchy in the Apostate Church of Rome we opposed, no controversy, of course, could be permitted; but it is, thanks to the true light of the Gospel, far different within the Protestant Churches, and we

would, in union with the whole true brotherhood, indignantly repel and disown the slightest idea that we are to call any man master on such vital matters, or receive any new doctrine without sifting it to the foundation. And if the "Higher Critics," like one of the ancients, cut up, as with their penknife, any portion of Scripture, as they have long been trying to do, they must be made to answer for it. We have to remember also that, as Churches, we are paying "Higher Critics" large salaries in many cases, and when it is being discovered that they are giving us imaginations for facts, it may be no great wonder if the common sense of the ordinary Church member begins to assert itself in a way which may be most appreciated by the Critics.

We do not put forward the very usual and quite legitimate plea of manifest infringement of the Westminster Confession of Faith, to which many of the "Higher Critics" have solemnly avowed their adherence. This plea, it seems to us, would be all too ridiculous to make, as most of the Critics we have been referring to, are, in our opinion, not within ten thousand miles of that Confession, although, as we have said, not a few of them have solemnly subscribed, and repeatedly avowed their allegiance to it.

Our Lord has said that Moses wrote of Him, and He also said that if men believe not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded,

though one rose from the dead. From the writings of Moses we also further learn that the imaginations of man's heart are evil, only evil, and that continually. We cannot but remark that the Scriptures, indeed, very wonderfully describe and, as it were, reply to such men as the "Higher Critics" and to such work as they are wont to produce for they belong to an old generation. Thus:—

"Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients
"of Israel do in the dark, every man in the
"chambers of his imagery? for they say The Lord
"seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the
"the earth" (Ezek. viii. 12). "Thou hast seen
"all their vengeance and all their reproach, O
"Lord, and all their imaginations against me"
(Lam. iii. 60). Hear the references to the past
and admonitions for the present by the Apostle
to all the true followers of the Lord:—"When
"they knew God they glorified Him not as God,
"but became vain in their imaginations, and their
"foolish heart was hardened. Professing them-
"selves to be wise they became fools" (Rom. i.
21, 22). "For though we walk in the flesh we do
"not war after the flesh Casting
"down imaginations, and every high thing that
"exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,
"and bringing into captivity every thought to the
"obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 3—5).

Paul also says:—"The time will come when

“they will not endure sound doctrine; but after
“their own lusts shall they heap to themselves
“teachers, having itching ears; . . . and shall
“be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. iv. 3—4).

Such times as the Apostle predicts we seem to have fallen upon. And it is most pathetic and melancholy to find leaders of Churches no longer walking side by side with the Apostle in defence of the Scriptures of truth “which cannot be broken,” but, alas! now to be seen falling down before the wheels of the Juggernaut of modern Rationalism!

The “Higher Critics” and their followers cannot now believe in the Creation as recorded in Genesis, nor in the Fall of Man in Eden, nor in the promised Salvation as there announced, nor in the story of Cain and Abel, nor in Noah and the Deluge, nor in the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, nor of Joseph in Egypt, nor of Moses. They cannot believe in the meeting of God with Moses, nor in the miracles wrought at his hands, nor in his being alone with God on Mount Sinai, nor in all the commands then given him. Nor can they believe in the forty years’ sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. They cannot believe in the record concerning Job, nor in Jonah’s mission to Nineveh, nor in his being in the whale’s belly. Neither can they believe in the story of Daniel in the den of lions, nor of the other three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace. They cannot

believe in the truth of these and a multitude of other facts contained in the sacred writings, *as they are given, in the several books of the Old Testament.* They, the "Higher Critics," can only believe in such *portions or fragments* of these Scripture records as their own "*inner consciousness*" or "*Spiritual instinct*," so-called, may from time to time dictate to them, and from this sublime position they cannot recede. But they can, *so they profess*, believe in our Lord, who Himself believed to the very letter all these records in the Bible, and taught, expounded and enforced them continuously while here on earth. And they so believe in our Lord that they say they worship and adore Him as the Great Teacher, the only perfect One, and their only Saviour from sin and everlasting destruction.

Now, the critic's eye is said to be so educated and acute that, as compared with the ordinary reader, he can see, as with a microscope, the slightest divergence from the truth, from the very appearance of the composition and style of the writings of the Old Testament, that he can trace and tabulate the slightest change or deflection in structure, insomuch that he can detect not only a host of hitherto unknown writers, redactors, compilers and interpolators, but that he can discover the bias and intentions of those various and numerous scribes! All this of itself, if only partially true, would be most wonderful. And all the more so,

when we remember that the Hebrew Scriptures were committed to the keeping of the ancient chosen people, the Jews, who were so careful of the sacred trust, that every word, letter, jot and tittle was counted by them, lest the slightest error or admixture should at any time enter into the writings. Such extraordinary attainments on the part of our modern "Higher Critics" prove to us that they are much superior to our Lord and His apostles and other divinely inspired writers !

Our Lord did not find any mistakes or errors in the Scriptures, but He rebuked the Pharisees and Scribes who came to Him with their own traditions. He thus answered them—"Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark vii. 6—9.) In thus denouncing these traditions, which, as will be seen, were entirely outside the Hebrew Scriptures, it is to be noticed how He did on this and on other occasions emphasize the supreme and Divine authority He attached to what was written in the Scriptures, and in them only. When the Sadducees came to Him with a question about *immortality*, He answered and said unto them : "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the

“power of God. . . Have ye not read that which
“was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the
“God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the
“God of Jacob? God is not the God of the
“dead, but of the living.” (Matt. xxii. 29—32).
Mark particularly how our Lord deals with that
Scripture. His conclusion as here shown de-
pended solely on the one word *am*. Had that word
been simply changed to the word *was*—that is to
say, from the present tense to the past tense—the
authoritative proof of the *Resurrection* from that
Scripture would have fallen to the ground.
There are other instances similar to this, where
on a *word* and even on a *single letter* of a word
hang the conclusion of our Lord respecting the
Old Testament Scriptures.

If our Lord had known of any error or corrup-
tion in the sacred writings He would have told
us, but as we know, He made it very clear that He
regarded them as infallibly correct in every jot
and tittle of their composition.

How ignorant and benighted, then, must have
been our Lord, as compared with our modern
scientists, philosophers, and divines, so-called, who
have appeared in these closing years of the
nineteenth century! How equally ignorant and
benighted were all the Apostles and Divinely
inspired teachers of New Testament times, who
through the Divine Spirit spoke and wrote also
according to the mind of our Lord! What shall

be done, and where shall we look to find the high honours which must be conferred upon our modern reverend critics, who, by their alleged discoveries, if believed, have surpassed the Infinite? What honours, we ask, can ever be devised for such transcendent greatness? It would require a new world to be struck into existence and specially prepared for their own exalted habitation! We would need here the author of "Paradise Lost" to do justice to the subject. For only he who in such sublime conceptions depicted the mysterious workings of the Satanic mind and the Fall of man, could adequately describe the splendid work, with its far-reaching effects, performed by the "Higher Critics," and also the lofty pinnacle of fame to which, by such work, they have attained!

If we have been in any way astonished, as we may well be, at the professed discoveries on the part of the "Higher Critics" respecting Holy Scripture, it will also be admitted that a greater wonder still is to be seen in the contrast between their supposed mental superiority and their *moral* insight. We refer to their apparently entire want of ability to discern the obliquity of their position in making a profession of Christianity, and yet continuing to do the work of the "Higher Critics." *

We all believe in progress and earnestly desire it in everything, but especially do we all desire

*NOTE.—It is to the Modern Critics themselves that the terms "*Crude Morality*" and "*pious fraud*" have become applicable, and not to any Old Testament writer, as they have so gratuitously and even profanely represented

progress in the divine and heavenward life. But we refuse to believe that the re-appearance of Voltaire or Paine, dressed out in fine clerical robes, is evidence of any kind of progress whatever. And this, putting it roundly, and in what some may call picturesque form, is what we have now pretty largely set before us, as the mark of a broad charity and refinement which has hitherto been neglected or unknown. But, to change our illustration, we seriously remark that the "Higher Critics" are builders on a foundation of sand. On this foundation they have built a palace for themselves. It is built of "uncertainties," mostly of their own manufacture. "Uncertainties" are their own most precious "blocks with which they build." They still go on adding to their luxurious edifice, and in these habitations of their own handiwork they and their guests may have comfort and revel for a time; but the day of trial comes, the storm of judgment approaches. Is the Hand writing upon the wall not already appearing? Whether they are aware of the awful danger of their position or not, it is none the less there. We sincerely hope they may see their error and turn from it, for the facts are against them, and the law of facts is inexorable. But if they turn not, the word of our Lord to the Pharisees on a certain occasion will, we believe, be true also in their case—"But now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

As no confidence could be placed in the ration-

alistic writers of a hundred years ago—nor even listened to for an instant—who had at least some of the virtue of consistency, however sad their position, much less can we rely on the modern “Higher Critics.” We refer especially to those who subsist upon the coffers of the Churches. They are all doubtless respectable in the eyes of the world, and that is, we daresay, most important for them; but they are not more respectable and not quite so influential in the Church and the world as were the great body of Scribes and Pharisees in the time of our Lord. And we all know with what terrible words He denounced these men time after time. And may we not with special appropriateness and application here, conclude with some of our Lord’s words on the Mount:—“Think not that I am come to destroy “the law, or the prophets: I am not come to “destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto “you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one “tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be “fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of “these least commandments, and shall teach men “so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of “heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, “the same shall be called great in the kingdom of “heaven. For I say unto you, That except your “righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of “the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case “enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

III.

THE CONCLUDING GENERAL VIEW, AND CONDEMNATION OF THE “HIGHER CRITICISM.”

SOME may be disposed to urge the objection that more detailed statements from their works should have been produced in evidence of the truth of our indictment against the “Higher Critics,” but as their works are now so widely known, we do not think it at all necessary to give more lengthened quotations. If, however, more are wanted by any critic in particular, there is ample material available to supply the demand.

We have said that we summon the “Higher Critics” before the bar of common rectitude—or, to put it more directly, perhaps, we summon them before the bar of conscience. And have we not

a right to do so? Is the living, believing Church of God not deeply interested in a matter of this kind? Manifestly many sections of the professing Church of God, especially the leaders in these Churches, have failed lamentably in their clear duty towards many of the "Higher Critics" coming directly under their jurisdiction. Like Eli of old, although these leaders themselves be true believers, yet they have sadly neglected to do their utmost to check, rebuke, and punish if unrepentant, such offenders in their midst. And as it happened in the case of that weak and sinfully indulgent prophet referred to, similar—yea, even more disastrous results have been, and undoubtedly will be, experienced. Yes, we hold we have a right to summon these men, and we must ask them to continue to stand at that bar for examination and for the judgment of the Christian Church. If they are not prepared to renounce their opposition to the declarations of Christ and the Divinely taught writers of the New Testament in regard to the Old Testament Scripture, we become bound, in the name of our Lord, to lift up our voice against these false teachers, and with one united testimony denounce their whole work, not only as containing the essential principles of infidelity, but, from the evidence before us, entitling us to charge them with making a profession of Christianity which can have no real foundation.

It is undoubtedly an almost universal and continual experience of the living Church of Christ to have infidelity, in various forms, arrayed against her, and even infidelity under the cloak of Christian profession has never been wanting. But it may be questioned whether, in all the past since New Testament times, there has ever appeared such a formidable enemy to the Church of Christ as that which is being manifested under the name of this great apostasy of the "Higher Criticism."

The true position, as we have repeatedly indicated, for the modern Critics to take up, would be among the infidels of past ages, some of whose names we have mentioned. It was a comparatively easy matter to deal with the sceptics of last century, because they kept their legitimate position outside all Christian profession. But when we find men holding the same sceptical views regarding Old Testament Scripture, and yet abiding within the Church, entitled, so long as they are there, to all the privileges of it, the difficulties of contending with this hydra-headed foe are immensely increased. And we have every evidence that this is the actual state of matters within the Church of Christ at the present moment.

But what is to be done? Is the Church of God, in view of these things, to fold her arms and fall asleep with lukewarm satisfaction or indif-

ference? The counsel of many of whom better things might be expected is, alas, of this nature. Let matters go on, all will come right, say they. They would even suggest that there may be good derived from the work of the Critics; and some, indeed, are ready to turn round with an air of offended dignity, and seriously ask if we place no value upon the opinions of the "Higher Critics," many of whom are widely respected in the Churches. Our answer to all such indignant persons, is, that we do not attach any value whatever, but the contrary, to such opinions, come from whom they may. In contrast, we ask all to look at our Lord. As we stand together with Him, how, we must ask, do such men as the "Higher Critics" bulk in our eyes? Can we see them at all? We confess, in all sincerity, that from this standpoint the "Higher Critics," *so far as their authority is concerned, are nothing, and less than nothing to us.*

It is one of the first duties of the living Church, is it not, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints? Does it not become us, therefore, in all seriousness, to fight against the unaccountable apathy shown towards so great an evil now deeply rooted in almost every Protestant Church throughout the greater part of the world? Is it at all likely or possible, humanly speaking, that the work of the "Higher Critics" will soon be cast aside and disappear from the Churches?

We hope of God's Grace it may be so, and all things are blessedly possible with Him, but present appearances are against the expectation. The seeds of scepticism respecting Scripture have now, as the tares of the parable, been sown in nearly every Christian field, and since they have, through the negligence of lukewarm overseers, been allowed to spring up, and that in great abundance, the rooting-up process may now be too late, as such an operation at this late hour of the day may be neither safe nor possible. But there is another course always open, and that is to obey the teaching of the Spirit, who says to all who are in circumstances of evil contamination: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." In view of the deplorable condition of the teaching now so prevalent, of such a dangerous character, we can only say that we are profoundly convinced that, in order to give a clear testimony of our abhorrence of such a state of matters, and also for the true peace and prosperity of the Church of Christ, there seems at present no other way open for the believing but that of separation.

The most of the Churches, as we have indicated, are being saturated and weakened to the very foundations through the "Higher Criticism." There are noble exceptions. We cannot forget, but must ever dearly cherish the memory of one who ever, even amid much persecution, stood in the forefront in his testimony against the "Higher

Critics." We refer to the beloved Spurgeon, whom we can only think of as a man of the most exalted character and the peerless of preachers. We give the following brief extracts from an address delivered by him at a public Conference, in 1889. "I have had," he says, "to pass through sore trials, as you know; they have not been by any means small ones; but had I foreknown and foreseen everything that has happened, I would have done exactly as I did. Indeed, like Luther, I could 'do no other.' I am not able to make a compromise concerning the truth of God. I am so constituted that I can only believe that 'twice two are four,' and I have not sufficient genius, or whatever other quality that may be needful, to admit that it may be four and a quarter, or perhaps only three and a half. It may have been very easy, very comfortable, and possibly very clever for others to have acted otherwise than I have done: but I could not do it, nor shall I begin to try to do it."

Again he says: "I do not know how to trust myself to speak of *the men who have two creeds*, and I am sorry I know many who have—one is for private consumption, for their own personal belief, or to be introduced at 'fraternal' meetings, and other gatherings where brethren of their own way of thinking meet together; but they have a very different creed when they come into the pulpit. If this gets to be a very general thing, ministers

will become a by-word and a proverb, and they will make religion to be utterly contemptible among honest men and women. Let it never be so with us, brethren. As for myself, I believe nothing that I do not preach, and so far as I know I am prepared to preach everything I believe; if I acted otherwise, I should count myself worthy to be shut up in a prison cell for life as a rogue and a vagabond."

"I think" he again says, "that our reverence for the Scripture ought to be supreme. I do not believe that it can be carried too far; and personally I would go the length of saying that I accept every word of it from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, as it was given by God in the original documents. I believe the Bible teaches the truth about natural history or about any sort of history, or about philosophy, or anything else; and that, although there have been historical statements in it which have been questioned for a while, some old stone has been turned up at Nineveh, or somewhere else, containing an ancient record showing that the Bible was right all the time If you admit that there is even one error in the Word of God, you have got rid of the infallible Author; if He can err on one point, if He is mistaken on some minor matter, depend upon it He is not to be trusted in the more important points."

These utterances cannot be mistaken, and certainly do not miss the mark.

We never had the privilege of his personal acquaintance, but have known his work well, and we are inclined to believe that since the days of the Apostles no man raised up of God has through His grace done such a great and good work as that of C. H. Spurgeon. All over the world millions rejoice in his preaching of the Gospel, and in a very emphatic way "his works do follow him." We think, however, the crowning and most endearing characteristic of the great preacher was his faithfulness to the truth of God. He showed himself willing to sacrifice everything which might otherwise be dear to him for the honour and glory of God. In this love of God and His truth lay indeed the secret, we believe, of the immense work he was enabled so heartily to perform.

There are undoubtedly other notable instances of divinity professors and preachers who still stand by the good old path. All honour to such ; but after making every allowance for the many valiant defenders of the Truth of God, it has yet to be confessed that the teaching of the "Higher Criticism" prevails in nearly all the seats of learning, and young ministers have now for several years been coming out of the colleges in crowds imbued less or more with the ideas of the sceptics.

We are sure multitudes of church attenders

will bear us out when we say that in the churches generally, even in those reputed to be most orthodox, it is found that hearers can seldom depend upon a preacher proclaiming the real Scripture message of God. One day he will, it is true, give a discourse founded on and supported wholly from Divine revelation, which may be termed evangelical; but perhaps on the very next occasion the same preacher will completely undermine and throw down what he had previously built up by declaring, either directly or indirectly, that the very portions of Scripture from which he had given the evangelical teaching cannot be held as quite reliable. And so this intermittent kind of teaching of the "Higher Criticism" goes on continuously. The results are therefore becoming more and more alarming, and however outwardly decorous the routine work of the churches is carried on, this worm of unbelief which appears ever gnawing at the root of Scripture truth has produced and is producing a state of decay which we fear no human instrumentality may now be charged with the power to counteract.

We do not, we think, exaggerate the evil; and whether it may be doubted or not, we also assert that there has, in our opinion, been for some time a growing indifference to Divine things generally among a great mass of even regular church-going people. The highest bliss and consummation of a year's work appears occasionally to be some

secular sensational entertainment provided for the delectation of the members and workers of these churches. It is also becoming every day, we may say, more evident that there is now to be seen outside of churches, both in towns and country districts—we refer to Scotland, at least—an amount of gross immorality such as has not been witnessed for many generations. If this is so, as we regret to believe, we cannot but attribute much of this flagrant shameless state of things to the scepticism which we see propagated within the churches through the “Higher Criticism.” We are at the same time not forgetting the fact that there never was a period, perhaps, in the history of Christianity when so much faithful earnest mission work was done both at home and abroad as at the present time. So that while decay is manifest at the heart of the churches the saving work of God still goes on wherever the true Gospel is believingly proclaimed.

In occupying the attitude we do, of entire confidence in Scripture, and especially because of our Lord’s affirmations regarding it, we must not allow it to be inferred that we are indifferent in regard to a full and clear exposition of any and every portion of it. On the contrary, while recognising our childhood, as we must at best ever do, in this matter, we are and ought to be in earnest in seeking to know more and more the mind and will of God so far as He may be

pleased to reveal it to us. And it is just here, we may say, that we come upon the fundamental error of the Critics. They have been searching for light where no true light can be found—apart from God. Nothing can be more clearly taught or known than this, that Holy Scripture can only be understood through the Spirit of God. For, as these Scriptures were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so they can only be interpreted aright through the same Spirit. Even those portions of Scripture about which there may have been no controversy whatever cannot be rightly understood unless through the indwelling of the Spirit. Our Lord Himself could not be known except through the Holy Spirit, for we remember His words to Peter. When that Apostle said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” He answered, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.” Paul’s declaration is in exact correspondence with this, for he writes, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”—(1 Cor. xii. 3.)

The “Higher Critics” have now been long engaged in their work. Some years ago, many of them would have indignantly denied that they held such views as they have recently been boldly proclaiming. As we have said, there is much blame in certain quarters to be attached to Church leaders, for not having at an early stage

withstood the advance of the Critics, and in such a way as has been consistently and faithfully done by evangelical Churches frequently during the last half-century. Yet, however lamentable and paradoxical the remark may appear, we may add that it may have been as well, in one sense, that these Critics should have been allowed to run their full natural course. When their destructive work is clearly seen in all its hideousness, a general revulsion may be expected. Just as in the proverb it is sometimes said of a certain person, "Only give him rope enough and he will hang himself," so may it be said of the "Higher Critics," the more extensive their work the more clearly will its fatal and untrustworthy character stand revealed, and pronounce its own condemnation.

We might go on to show the general declension and looseness of view engendered in regard to some of the most vital doctrines contained in the Word of God, as the natural sequence to the "Higher Criticism." On the principles and lines of the "Higher Critics" there is indeed nothing Divine which may not be supplanted by some merely human conception. But we do not mean to proceed further at present in that direction.

The "Higher Critics" often make the statement, and it is a most singular one, that they wish in their teaching to go back to Christ and to

Him only. By this they imply, and even plainly declare—another fallacy of theirs—that our Lord's teaching was different from that of the Apostles and other New Testament writers. It is most difficult to entertain such a naked self-contradictory statement, seeing, as is abundantly evidenced, that the whole superstructure of their work as "Higher Critics" is a direct denial of our Lord's authority and teaching. This enigma, if it had not been in keeping with their position otherwise, would have been incredible. Who could have expected or imagined that the Critics, after labouring, so to speak, with all their might to prove an immense amount of error and romance in the Scriptures—which work they know to be directly opposed to our Lord's express declarations—should ever wish for any of His teaching?

Yet, true it is, after doing all this, and continuing to hold by their contradictions, they come to Him, as we see, making great professions of belief in His teaching, and, to use the language of Scripture itself, bowing as it were before Him, saying, "Lord, Lord!"

Another, but subsidiary feature of the modern "Higher Critic," which may be pointed out, is his ready acquiescence generally in proposals for union with other Churches. Well, true union is ever desirable, but we do not believe any union which can take place under such a condition of things as those referred to can be of any real

value one way or another. But for men of such views as the "Higher Critics," and for all who are allied with their work, there can, it is evident, be no barrier on their own part to uniting with Churches of any possible description. Even the *heathen religions* of the world, it may be remarked, have the respect and admiration of the Critics, and they appear to glory in this spurious charity. It would seem that a professed Christian Missionary, by long residence among the heathen, may become enamoured of the heathen religions, and we regret to say we appear to have had recently some striking indications of this from India. But all aberrations or delinquencies of this kind are to be overlooked. Wealth, worldly position and influence, being now so much the great determining forces at the centre and also in the main body of certain Church organizations, all these and other like departures from the faith are to be counted as trivial matters. And so, even Balaam, some would seem to say, may have, after all, a legitimate and honoured place among the Israel of God!

How different with the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Was there ever a man more loving, with more bowels of compassion for the erring and sinful, than Paul? But see how he hated departure from the truth of the Gospel. As has been truly said, "There is no anger like the anger of love. There is no indignation like

“the wrath of the Lamb.” Hear how he writes to the Churches of Galatia: “But there be some “that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel “of Christ. But though we, or an angel from “heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than “that which we have preached unto you, let him “be accursed. As we said before, so say I now “again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto “you than that ye have received, let him be “accursed.”—(Gal. i. 7—9).

If we are asked how and when did the “Higher Criticism” begin, we think we can offer a very simple solution of the question. When we look carefully into the nature and course of the first temptation to rebellion and sin, we will discover an instance of the kind which for point and subtlety we believe has never since been surpassed. When the Serpent appeared before Eve it was to undermine the Word of God, but he pretended to be an expositor of it and only to give more enlarged ideas and light regarding it. He said to her, “Ye shall not surely die; for “God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof . . . “ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Here was a contradiction of the Word of God, which had been given to our first parents, but adroitly glossed over by the tempter with the pleasing idea of greater good to follow the transgression. May we not commend the study of this first attack upon the Word of God, as there may, we

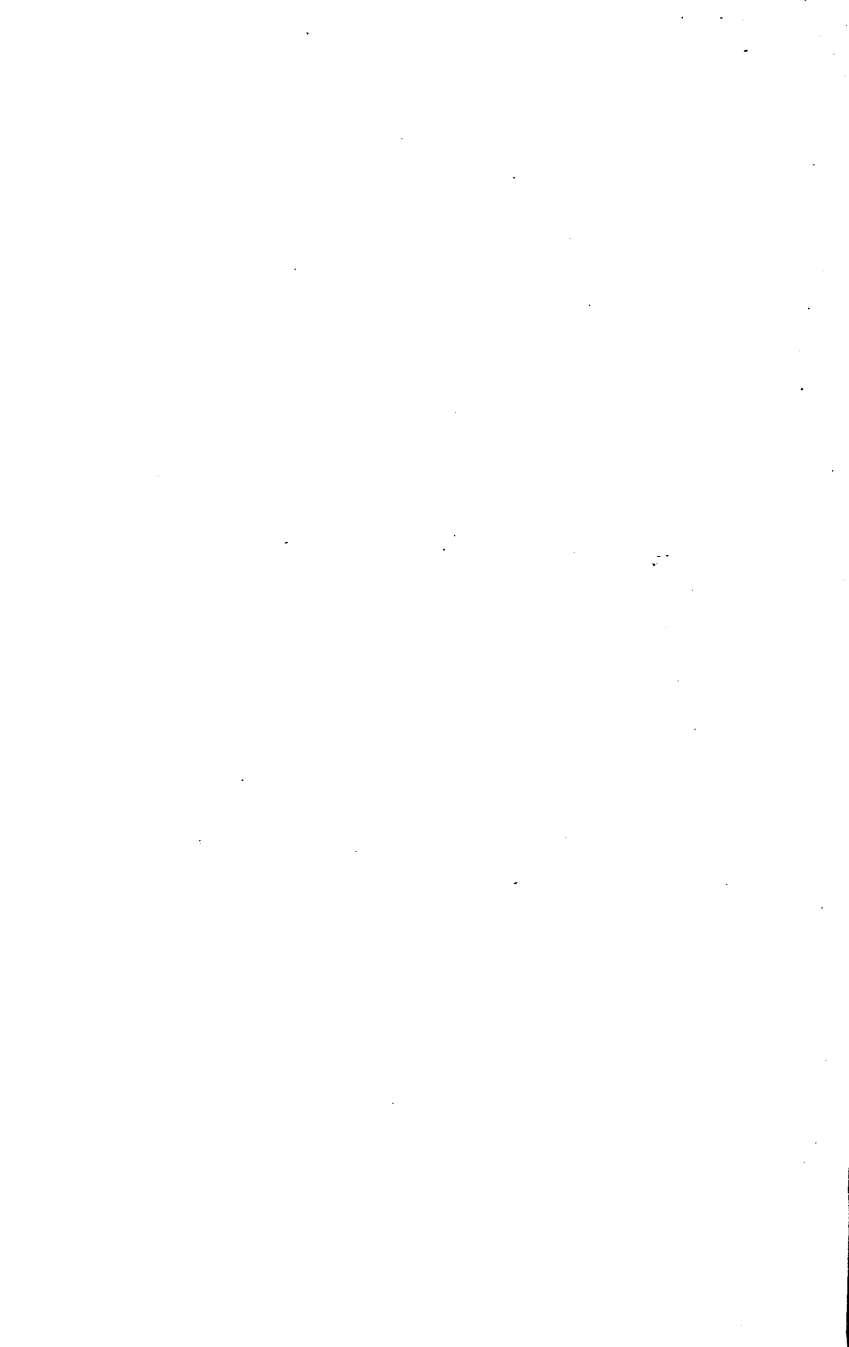
think, be seen in it, at once, the origin and typical example of the modern "Higher Criticism."

In conclusion, we need scarcely remark that, in view of all this, the believing Church of God finds an urgent call to prayer and effort. We have said appearances are against the expectation that the work of the "Higher Criticism" will soon disappear from the Churches; and the more carefully it is looked into the more hopeless will the prospect of improvement appear. That, however, is only the human side. There is another and a better. "The Lord's Hand is not shortened." On one occasion Moses replied to a murmuring people in these words: "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Moses was deep in prayer to God when he uttered these words, and the utterance, as we know, was a Divine revelation; but combined with true prayer, as always, there was also a readiness of action; and just then it was: "The Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou to me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Could there be anything more sublime and noble than the faith and action

of Moses on that occasion? Another majestic figure stands out before us in the olden times in the person of Elijah. As we see him on Mount Carmel, confronted with the 450 prophets of Baal, we find like prayer, and faith in God; and at the conclusion of his signal triumph through the Divine power, we seem still to hear those significant and terrible words of the prophet: "Let not one of them escape." Time and space for repentance, and many warnings, had been given before these events alluded to took place, and in both instances judgment and mercy, doubtless, mingled together. And are we to regard these striking deliverances through faith and prayer as evidence of the childhood of the human race? It must be otherwise. We ought rather to see in them the eternal and unchangeable spirit of truth and love, and an encouragement, under all circumstances, to trust in God and in Him alone. And if we should be tempted by anyone to think of these men—Moses and Elijah—or of their work, as in any sense mythical or unreal, let us call to remembrance the most interesting and instructive fact that these were the two men who were privileged to talk with our Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. And we may also well believe that one of the great purposes of our Lord, in the appearing of these men with Him on that occasion, was to show His approval of them and to give added testimony to the faithfulness of the Scripture

record of their eventful history. Therefore, as of old, so now, the Lord is the refuge and strength of His Church and people. According to their faith in Him and in Him only, so shall they overcome, and so also shall they have the unspeakable joy of His abiding presence.





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